

Some Hard Facts about MBA Job Searches

After almost two years of graduate school, John Wainwright was about to receive his MBA from a leading business school. But he was not particularly happy, nor was he looking forward to graduation. John didn't have a job.

Although this situation may seem unusual, every year many MBA graduates discover that their degree does not automatically guarantee them a job. They graduate without an acceptable offer.

General economic conditions certainly contribute to situations like John's, but we find that many job hunters do not plan for the time it takes to conduct an effective and successful job search. Some MBA candidates rely heavily on others, such as the placement office, to conduct the search for them; others merely go through the job search motions, finding false security in published statistics about the placement percentage for graduating classes. Still others, like John, continually postpone the search until, sadly, they are faced with a difficult and trying set of circumstances. Perhaps a little more information about John and his situation will help to illustrate this problem.

John completed his first year of business school without a great amount of difficulty. He was more interested in marketing and consulting courses and, as a result, signed up for several classes in those areas for his second year. While he liked his classes, John was still not sure what he wanted to do. As Christmas approached, conversations with classmates turned more and more toward jobs. Some classmates knew exactly what they wanted, while others were still thinking about different possibilities. John was not particularly worried;

others seemed to be in the same stage as he was, and there was still plenty of time before graduation in May. Besides, his attention was better directed toward classes, papers, and finals. After the semester was over, he decided to relax and enjoy vacation. January was soon enough to start his job search.

Interview sign-ups began shortly after vacation ended in January. John felt awkward signing up for interviews because he still didn't know what he wanted to do. Everyone else in the class was securing interview slots, so John decided to sign up for several interviews too. Surely, he thought, at least one of the interviews would work out. Class work at this point was taking most of his time, so he picked firms that were well-known, seemed to be popular with his classmates, and offered above-average salaries. None of the interviews went particularly well, and by the time John realized that he would not get any second interviews, recruiters had stopped coming to the school.

John began to set up appointments with faculty members, hoping that a few words of advice would solve his problem. When that failed, John began to write letters furiously. Much to his dismay, most companies never replied, and those that did were not offering interviews. John's worst fears had come true. He graduated without a job.

What disturbs us most about John and the others that we have observed in his situation is not that they don't have jobs, but that the majority of their problems were unnecessary. Job searching is a personally demanding and time-consuming process. We believe that many of the problems facing MBA job hunters can be foreseen and managed with effective planning.

In order to gather data that might assist MBA candidates in planning their job search, we

distributed a questionnaire in the spring of 1981 to the graduating class of the Harvard Business School and to a portion of the graduating class at the Colgate Darden Graduate School of Business, University of Virginia. Approximately fifty percent of the graduating class at Harvard completed and returned the survey. The results therefore reflect the experience of a large portion of the class. The Darden survey was completed by about thirty students who took an elective course on career development in the fall of their second year. We recognize that the results of the surveys may or may not be representative of the MBA community as a whole. Our hope is that the information provides some insights into MBAs and their job searches that you will find useful in planning your own job search.

Key Characteristics of Job Searching

Time

Most MBA candidates encounter difficulties at some time during their job search directly due to lack of time. As we mentioned earlier, job hunting will demand a substantial portion of your time during the second year. The average MBA student in both

surveys reported spending 150 to 175 hours on job search activities between September and April of the second year. A few students reported spending no time on job hunting, while others spent as much as 600 hours in job search activities.

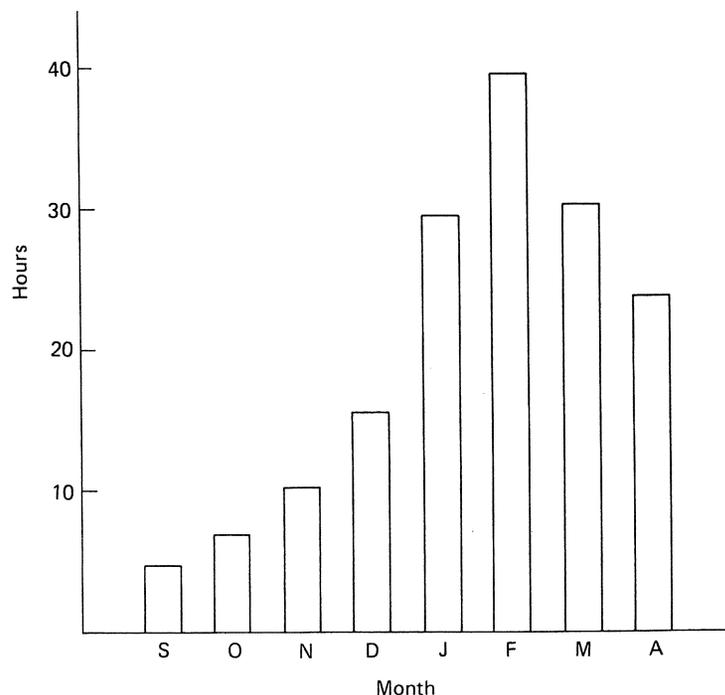
Most students spend over sixty-five percent of this time during a three-month peak period from January to March. During this peak period, the average respondent devoted ten hours per week to job hunting; this is the equivalent of two full-time courses. Some MBAs even reported spending up to forty hours per week in March on job search activities. Exhibit 23-1 shows the average hours spent on job search activities by the Harvard respondents. In our experience, most MBAs who fail to plan adequately for this substantial time commitment encounter a variety of problems in their job search.

Career Choice

John Wainwright's uncertainty about the type of career he wanted was not particularly unusual. In fact, most MBAs begin their second year with an unclear idea of what they want to do. Both the Harvard and Darden respondents to the survey reported that in September they were highly uncertain in matters concerning career choice. The average MBA,

Exhibit 23-1

**Hours Spent on Job Search Activities
(Harvard Survey)**



however, becomes more and more certain as the months progress. This increasing confidence is illustrated in Exhibit 23-2.

In the Harvard survey, only thirty percent of the respondents reported feeling “very certain” of what they wanted to do when school started in September. Twenty-seven percent reported that they were very uncertain. By January, forty-eight percent felt certain and only thirteen percent felt uncertain. By April, eighty-two percent felt certain that they knew what they wanted to do, while only nine percent still felt very uncertain. In our experience in working with MBA students over the years, those students who begin to sort out career choices early in the second year tend to have more productive and satisfying job searches.

Source of Contact

If you are like most MBA candidates, you will rely heavily on the school placement office to identify and contact your future employer. As measured by the sources of contact for accepted job offers, over forty-three percent of the Harvard graduates surveyed found employment through the placement office. This was over twice as many as any other source of contact. Summer job experiences and personal contacts accounted for seventeen and fifteen percent, respectively.

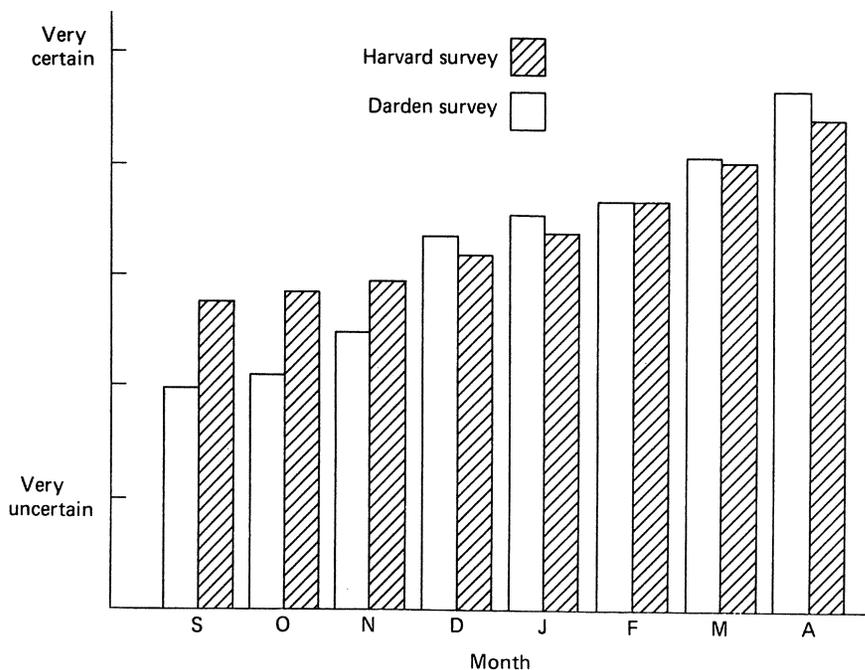
The high percentage of contact made through the placement office is due in part, we feel, to the effectiveness of placement office activities. We also sense, however, that MBAs are increasingly passive in conducting their job searches. John Wainwright, for example, was depending on some unknown factor reflected in placement statistics to conduct much of his job search for him.

Advice

Another indication of the increasing trend toward passivity is illustrated by the ways and stages at which MBAs seek advice. The average respondent talked to seven people about his or her job choice. A substantial number, thirty-five percent in the Harvard survey, reported not consulting with *anyone* about their job search. Like John, most MBAs do not seek advice during November, December, and January. During the early stages of the job search, our observations are that MBAs tend to rely on the placement office and to follow the crowd in signing up for interviews.

Many MBAs begin to ask for counsel late in the job hunting process. Most students talk to people about their job search only after they have received some firm offers. Students seem to hope that advisors will somehow guide them toward the “right” offer. The students who do not receive offers often

Exhibit 23-2
Student Confidence in What They Want to Do



seek advice, hoping that someone else can solve the problem.

Interviews

As John's experience illustrated, having interviews does not necessarily result in having a job. While one must, almost always, have interviews to get a job, there does not appear to be any correlation between the number of interviews and the number of offers. In fact, in our experience, those students with the greatest number of interviews often are below average in the number of offers. Those students with the greatest number of offers often are those who had an average or even slightly below average number of interviews. As illustrated in Exhibit 23-3, there was no correlation between interviews and the number of offers in those surveyed at the Darden School.

The average MBA in both surveys had about twenty-five different interviews with twenty-three different companies, including first, second, and third rounds. The peak interviewing period was between January and March (see Exhibit 23-4). Students have commented to us after the interviewing season that having several "tuneup" or practice interviews was neither particularly beneficial, nor likely to increase the number of successful interviews as measured by offers. Some students even found such interviews to be detrimental because they adversely affected their interviewing attitude and approach.

Offers

The statistics certainly *are* in John Wainwright's favor. Of those we surveyed, over eighty percent had received at least two offers and over ninety-four percent had received at least one offer by the end of April. The average MBA in both surveys received between three and four offers as a result of his or her efforts. The statistics show that most MBAs do indeed get jobs.

The statistics also show, however, that some students do not get jobs. Twenty-one students in the Harvard survey reported having no firm offers at the time of the survey. In the Darden survey, four students reported having no firm offers by June. For those students, published aggregate statistics are little comfort.

Job Selection

MBA's we talk to have a fairly clear picture of the factors involved and the relative importance of each factor for their own personal job selection. In the questionnaire, we asked the students to rank fourteen various factors in regard to job selection. The MBA's who responded in both surveys did not rank starting salary as particularly important. The most important factors listed by the students were colleagues and work setting, starting function, variety of job content, and geographical location. The least important factors were impact on society, travel demands, prestige of the organization, and starting

Exhibit 23-3

**Interviews vs. Offers
(Darden Survey)**

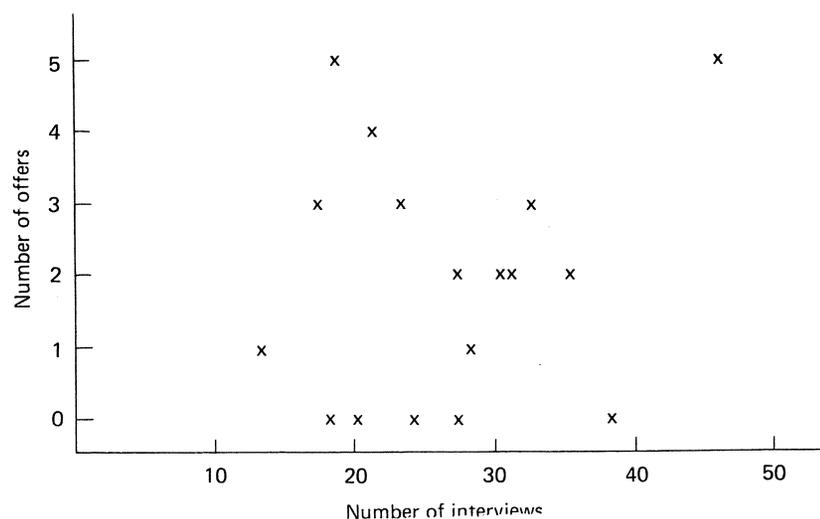
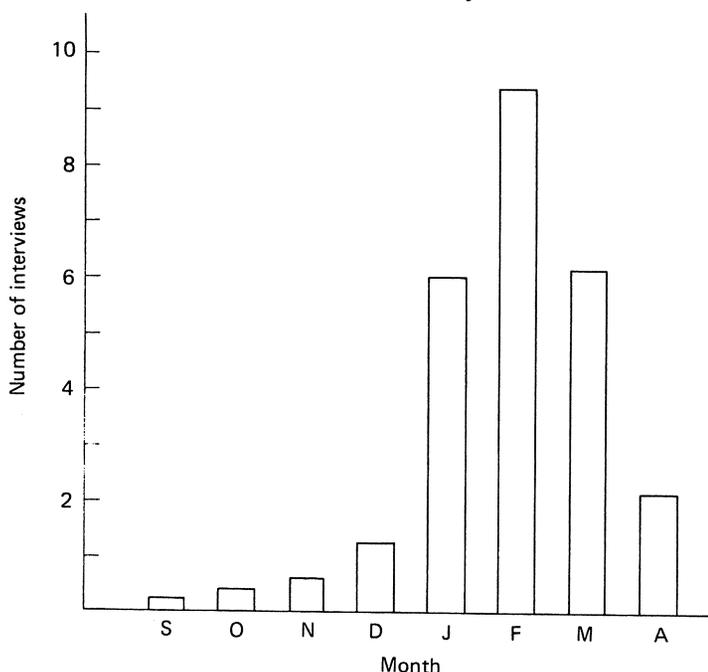


Exhibit 23-4

Average Interviews per Month
(Harvard Survey)



salary. The ranking of the 14 factors in both surveys is shown in Exhibit 23-5.

Anxiety

Every year we see a new MBA class go through the trauma of looking for jobs. In every class there are some students who have few problems in finding a job. Some students, like John Wainwright, have severe problems. Most students are somewhere in between. The majority of students that we know experience some type of anxiety during the recruiting process. Feeling some anxiety is natural; choosing a career is an important decision. A significant number of MBAs, however, experience a very high level of anxiety, and high levels of anxiety can interfere with the effectiveness of a job search and with the health of the job hunter. We believe the level of anxiety felt by MBA job hunters is correlated to the way in which students approach the job search process. Those students who plan for the demands and strains of a job search in an MBA setting tend to experience lower levels of anxiety.

The questionnaire we distributed asked students to rate their level of anxiety in recruiting on a month-by-month basis. A 5-point scale was used to measure anxiety, with a 5 being a very high level of

anxiety. The average level of anxiety was low during the September to December period, as can be seen in Exhibit 23-6. Anxiety began to build in January and peaked in February and March. In February, sixty-five percent reported some anxiety; by March, only thirty percent reported a very high level of anxiety.

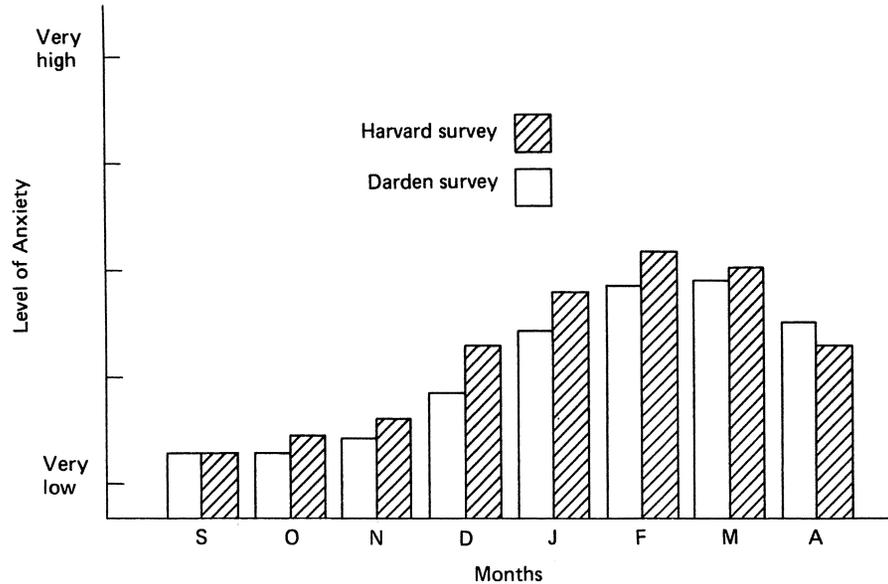
Exhibit 23-5

Relevant Importance of 14 Factors
in Job Selection

| Rank | Harvard Survey | Darden Survey |
|------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | People/work setting | People/work setting |
| 2 | Starting function | Geographic location |
| 3 | Geographic location | Variety of job |
| 4 | Industry | Starting function |
| 5 | Nonfinancial prospects | Financial prospects |
| 6 | Variety of job | Nonfinancial prospects |
| 7 | Financial prospects | Travel demands |
| 8 | Independence | Independence |
| 9 | Boss/mentor | Industry |
| 10 | Starting salary | Spouse's career |
| 11 | Prestige of company | Starting salary |
| 12 | Travel demands | Boss/mentor |
| 13 | Impact on society | Prestige of company |
| 14 | Spouse's career | Impact on society |

Exhibit 23-6

Level of Anxiety Experienced in Job Search Activities



Summary

Although the outcome of John Wainwright's job search was not typical, we have found that some of the characteristics of John's search were. Many MBA students do not plan for the substantial commitment of time and energy an effective job search entails. Students especially do not plan for the extra ten hours per week of work. Most MBAs begin their search without a clear picture of what they want to do. Yet despite this, they seek limited, if any, advice from others, especially during the early stages of their job search. Many approach the task passively, preferring to allow others, such as the placement office, to plan much of the job search for them.

Given this lack of a planned approach, it does not surprise us that so many MBAs feel anxiety during their job search. The highest level of anxiety we observed appears to be connected more with the search and the uncertainty of receiving an offer than with the selection of one offer. We believe that you can reduce the level of anxiety in your job search by planning for the extensive process involved in a job hunt. You can also make your experience more pleasant and successful by anticipating this anxiety and developing ways to deal with it. If MBAs planned for their search, perhaps the experience of John Wainwright would become even more unusual.

Assignment

Job Hunting Diary

Because job hunting can be hectic and confusing, some people find that keeping a diary is very useful. Periodically reading back over the last week's or month's entries often helps one put things in their proper perspective and conduct the whole job hunting process more dispassionately.

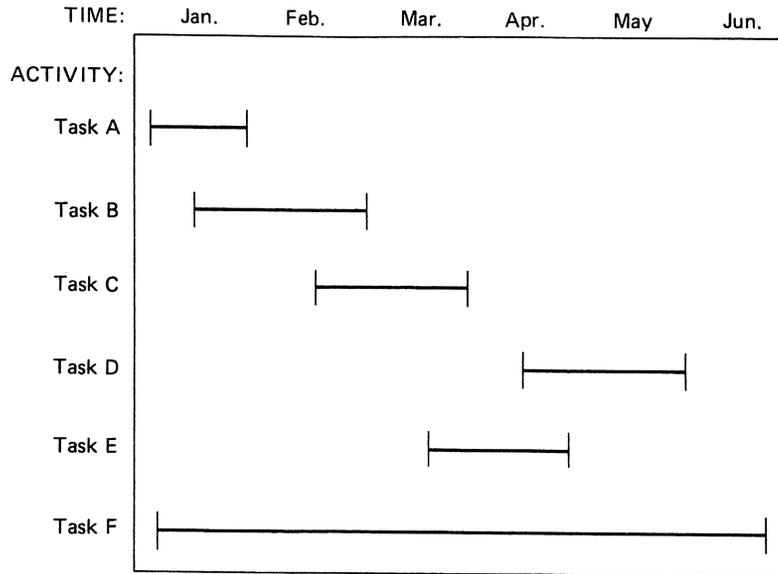
You might wish to keep a diary yourself and write your entries in this section of the workbook. The following guidelines may be helpful to you:

1. Make entries as often as you can (preferably once a day).
2. When making an entry, ask yourself:
 - a. What has happened today of importance with respect to job hunting?
 - b. How has this changed my strategy and plans, if at all?
 - c. How do I feel about today's events?

But before you go, take time to read Henry Rock's *Job Search Diary and Life Themes*. As you do, develop a Gantt chart of Henry's job search process. (A Gantt chart is a chart of the time span covered by specific activities or tasks contained in a process or project. See Exhibit 23-7.) This will help you to

Exhibit 23-7

A Simple Gantt Chart Outline



“see” more clearly the various tasks and lead times related to the job search. Note also the unexpected events Henry encountered. Note the things that Henry managed well and the things that Henry could have managed better in his job search. How,

if at all, could Henry have managed his job search more effectively? Finally, note the emotional side of Henry’s job search. What is the sequence of *feelings* Henry experienced? What does this tell you about the job search process?

HENRY ROCK: JOB SEARCH DIARY

October

We had our first placement office meeting in Burden. One of the things we spoke about was the writing of our résumés. The “career objective” was stressed as being very important and we were encouraged to be as specific as possible. Since my résumé was due in late October, I agonized over that portion of it for a week or so before realizing that I couldn’t honestly be specific. So I put down “initial job in marketing or finance with general management as long-run objective.” I hope this general statement isn’t harmful.

November

Over Thanksgiving I wrote 11 letters to northern California firms that are either coming to campus this year or who had come in the past. My goal is to work in either San Francisco or Boston. Being a bachelor, I’d hate to be stuck in some dead place.

There was a lot of work involved in getting these letters off. I went through the preliminary lists of companies coming to the school and checked last year’s job descriptions for job type and location. The card file (by region) also gave me some additional names. I also looked in *Sum-*

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mitt's MBA employment guide and got two additional names.

December

The replies to my letters started coming in. By the end of the month I had received replies to 8 of my initial 11 letters. Three of those eight were companies who were signed up at HBS, and they thanked me for my letter and said they looked forward to seeing me when they came to campus. Of the other five, three had come in the past but were not signed up for this year. One said they would be doing no hiring this year. Another said to see them if I came to San Francisco. The third said they planned to sign up soon to interview at the school.

The remaining two letters were from companies who had never come to the B-school. One said they had no needs for someone with my qualifications. The second said to see them when I came to San Francisco. Later in the week, I even got a call from one company that was coming to interview in March.

Before Christmas break, we had to turn in our priority cards. This was easy for me, as I had already researched who was coming to campus. There were four San Francisco firms I was interested in and I assigned priorities to them. For the fifth, I chose a consultant in Los Angeles. I'm not really that interested in number 5, and it made me mildly nervous that I only had four potential interviews that really seemed desirable.

Toward the end of the month, letters from employers started coming in as the result of the résumé book being distributed. These unsolicited letters are really an ego trip. I am especially impressed by the personalized ones.

January 1-7

Received three more replies to my California letters. Two were from companies coming to HBS and were enthusiastic and thanked me in the typical way. The third was from an employer not signed up to interview. They said they couldn't match my qualifications to their needs.

Continued to get unsolicited letters. Also, on January 2, job descriptions began to be posted outside the placement office. I plan to make a daily trip to check the postings.

January 8-14

I continue to make the daily trek to the placement office boards. The office is constantly packed and it's difficult to get near the board.

Everyone seems to be looking at each opportunity thoroughly.

January 16

Today I had a new career idea planted in my head. My financial accounting professor spoke of the public accounting profession and its virtues. I enjoy the issues in that class, so my eyes were opened when he said that MBAs often achieve the status of partner in 8-10 years at a salary of over \$100,000. In addition, the profession allows initial flexibility in geographical location. I can interview for the San Francisco office with no problem. My interest is aroused!

January 17

I signed up to interview a Chicago firm for a financial position. I was attracted to them by the fact that they sent me a personalized letter and an impressive packet of information. They also have a reputation for paying well and are a growth company. I'm not sure that I could stand to work in Chicago, but I'd like to get an offer, especially one with a high salary, to use as leverage. It's also something to fall back on if all else fails. That seems to be the general psychology here at this time—get an offer as soon as possible. I was one of the last in my neighborhood to sign up for an interview.

January 20

I decided it would be wise to send more letters to West Coast employers, specifically those who aren't coming to school. I spent hours over at Baker Library going through *Moody's* and *Standard and Poor's*. I got a list of about 30 or 40 companies and chose to write to 10 of them based upon my interests and potential compatibility with them. By the time I had sent off these 10 letters, I had invested about 10 hours of research in them. (All were personalized, of course). To date, I haven't been too concerned about researching Boston firms, as they are right here and can be contacted easily.

January 22

I went out to dinner with my girl friend to celebrate our one-year anniversary of dating. I was sort of uptight because I had an incredible amount of work for the next day. As we went to say goodnight, she asked me where our relationship was going. She has been pressuring me late-

ly with the end of school in sight, and it has been making me uneasy, especially since I'm uncertain about the relationship anyway. It was a bad time to ask me. I told her that I wasn't sure it was going anywhere and that we both should start to date other people. This completely blew her mind. She sat outside the apartment in her car and cried for 5 hours. I felt really bad, but also felt it was the right thing.

January 23

I signed up to speak with two of the San Francisco companies from my priority list who are coming next month. Also signed up to see a manufacturing company from New York. This is a hedge, also, against failure in San Francisco. However, like the Chicago company, they are an outstanding company and have good opportunities for MBAs. The New York company also seems fairly hot for me. They're taking me out to dinner on the 31st and have me interviewing on a closed list.

January 27

I've been trying to establish some communication with my girl friend. I didn't want to break things off altogether. She's been very hostile toward me, though. This surprises me, as I didn't think our discussion the other night was final. This hassle makes me less interested in staying in Boston. That had seemed to be a possibility before only because of her.

January 30

I had an appointment with my financial accounting professor to further investigate the possibility of working in that area. He turned me on even more and suggested three firms that he thought were the best. I discovered that one of them was interviewing on campus today. I ran home and threw on a suit and ran back, bringing my résumé to a walk-in interview at 4 o'clock. I had to B.S. my way through it, as I had done no research on the company. However, I think I was successful, and the interviewer promised to forward my résumé to the San Francisco office. I was relieved. That half-hour interview had seemed like two hours.

January 31

The dinner with the New York company was a bore. I didn't like the company representatives.

They were awkward and uptight and never seemed to know what to say. Several other HBS students were there and all seemed ill at ease as the result of their bumbling. The food was good, anyway.

February 1

Right after lunch I had my interview with the Chicago company. I had consumed a couple of beers during lunch and was half gassed when I walked into the interview. Luckily, I sat pretty far away from the interviewer so he couldn't smell my breath. The interview went pretty well. I had researched them a lot and asked some good questions. The interviewer seemed tense, though. I wonder if he knew I was gassed.

A couple of hours later I had my third interview of the year with the New York manufacturer. The interviewer, whom I hadn't met, seemed obnoxious and authoritarian. His group was similar to the group I had worked for last summer (although in a different company), so I told him I thought a lot of their work might be busy work and boring. He disagreed and we talked about it, but our interview went downhill. What a disastrous experience. I'll get rejected by them but won't care.

February 2

Signed up to see two more accounting firms and another San Francisco company that I had priority for. The placement office boards remain packed all the time.

February 3-4

Nothing.

February 5-7

Checked all the postings and correspondence opportunities. I read them all, just in case. I have a routine now where I stop by the office every day about the same time.

February 8

Spoke with my second accounting firm. Liked my interviewer a lot. He seemed much sharper than the other people I've spoken with. He promised to send my résumé to San Francisco, although he promised no results. Both accounting firms I've

talked with have had about five or six students wanting their résumés sent to San Francisco. They willingly do this, as they are ostensibly national recruiters. However, they are usually partners of the Boston office and would like to attract Harvard people to their own office. So it's a touchy situation. One must tread lightly.

February 9

I have thoroughly researched the San Francisco firm I'm talking to February 12. They are my number one priority. However, they have only one spot available, and my chances of getting it are slim. Perhaps I can get an edge by being well prepared.

February 10-11

This breakup with my girl friend has been continually on my mind. It has affected me in class and in my interviews. It's very upsetting. I'm getting more interested in leaving the area every day.

February 12

After being absent when called on last week, I was well prepared for class today. Directly after my second class I had an interview with my number one priority company. Although my chances of getting the job were never good, I was still very disappointed by the interview. The interviewer was a recent HBS grad, and we just didn't get along. Furthermore, he was 15 minutes late for the interview, so I was annoyed from the beginning. This was definitely one of the best jobs in San Francisco, so it is very disappointing.

However, I felt better when I went home because I had received a letter from accounting firm #1 telling me I was into phase 2 with them. That gave me a lift.

Tomorrow I talk with priority #4 from San Francisco. I am nervous about these West Coast interviews, as I am now sure I want to go to that area.

February 13

I had my interview after my first class today. The interviewer was a young, personable fellow and I liked him. He was also a skillful interviewer. I think he was impressed with me, too, so the interview was a success. Hopefully, they will invite me on a plant trip. Spring break is coming up soon (about 3 weeks), so I mentioned this to the

interviewer as a convenient time to visit. I hope they come through.

February 14

I had no interviews today. However, I received two responses to my San Francisco mailings. Most of the replies to these letters have been negative. However, out of the 15 letters I've sent to companies that have no plans to interview at HBS, I've received about one-third favorable responses. I think this is a good yield. I should mention that in the letters I said I'd be in the area soon and asked if they would be interested in seeing me. This removes the barrier of travel expenses. I would guess that this has increased the number of favorable responses. If I get a good job as a result, I think the \$305 plane fare is a great investment.

I had a bit of excitement today. At my Creative Marketing Strategy meeting I found out that I will be taking a trip to California. Although this will be a busy trip, I may get an opportunity to call some firms that have responded to my letters.

February 15

Today I spoke with my Starting New Ventures professor about finding a job with a small company in the control area. He got all excited and told me about two jobs he knows of. His enthusiasm is infectious. Now I'm interested in these opportunities.

Right after my appointment I spoke with another New York manufacturing firm. The interviewer was about 32 and was the head of the group I'd be in. He was very aggressive and pushy and made me very tense. He was also an extreme elitist. I knew I wouldn't like working for him.

After that interview, I went to a Pacific Northwest meeting. Only 6-8 people attended, but all spoke of their past and present efforts to get jobs in the West. No one seemed unusually successful, but I did pick up one or two ideas.

February 16

Although this was one of our Fridays off, I had a 10 A.M. interview with the Chicago firm at the Fenway Cambridge. It was my second interview with them and was an hour long. The interviewer was a soft-spoken HBS grad from 1966, whom I liked. He asked a lot of tough questions, such as "What do you consider the biggest potential problem of fit between you and our company right now?" I was very honest in the interview but wondered afterward if I hadn't been somewhat

emotional and inarticulate. I sensed that he either was very impressed or very turned off, but I couldn't judge which. I would like to get a job offer from them. They are an impressive company.

February 17-18

This weekend I decided to call up my old girl friend in California. We hadn't talked to each other in about a year but had a great conversation. That evening I went to a party and talked to a friend who is also moving to San Francisco. She encouraged me to go, too. These conversations really bolstered my determination to go back.

February 19

Nothing.

February 20

Today I got two letters from San Francisco. One was a rejection from a correspondence opportunity. The other was a positive response resulting from my California letters of January 20. Apparently the chairman of the company I originally wrote forwarded my résumé to his management consultant. The consultant said he may have something for me. I became intrigued and went to Baker Library to look for information about the consultant. Found nothing.

I've felt more anxious lately about this job search, particularly with respect to San Francisco. I've heard nothing encouraging or discouraging from any of the people I've spoken with on campus, and it's been about three weeks since I had my first interview.

This nervousness made me decide to take a more aggressive tack. When I came home, I wrote two follow-up letters to companies I'd interviewed in the past week, and one letter to a San Francisco correspondence opportunity from three weeks ago. At the time I hadn't been that turned on about that opportunity, but now I'm beginning to worry about job offers there.

I'm also concerned about the San Francisco companies that haven't replied, because I hope to go to the area over spring break. I'm worried now that I might have to pay for that trip myself, as plant trip invitations are still uncertain. This is compounded by the fact that my research report is sending me to San Francisco and Los Angeles next Monday for a week. Perhaps I should just stay there, as spring break is only one week after I get back. But I'm anxious about missing two weeks of classes. I haven't spoken in any

of them at all this term and can't afford to cut, too.

February 21

We had our CMS meeting at 6 P.M. One of the results of this meeting is that our California trip has been pushed back two days. I was really disappointed because I'd really been aiming for Monday. I can still go, though.

At home after the meeting, my day was made, however. I got a call from public accounting firm #2 inviting me out to San Francisco. Since this was my first firm trip offer, it really took a load off my mind. It was magnified an hour later when I got a call from my ex-girl friend in San Francisco who checked on my plans for spring break. She offered me the use of her car and apartment when I come out. That really made me feel good. I appreciate her friendship, especially in light of the recent hostilities between me and my local girl friend.

February 22

I had two interviews today, one with San Francisco priority #3 and one with public accounting firm #3 (first time for each). The first interview was disappointing. The interviewer and I just didn't hit it off and, besides, I found during the interview that the job involved living in Central or South America, and that turned me off.

The second interview was just the opposite. The interviewer and I really hit it off. He was a casual and interesting fellow. (He got his present job by impressing a partner of the Tokyo office during a conversation in a bar in the Philippines.) He appeared to like me, too, and said he'd send my résumé to San Francisco the next day, as I told him about my upcoming trip out West over spring break.

February 23

Today I called two companies in San Francisco and set up appointments for the spring break visit. Both of them were firms that had responded to my letters of November and January. It looks like I'll have about seven interviews when I go out.

At the placement office today the notice went up for my #2 San Francisco priority. It was a week and a half late. I was really glad to see it.

The placement office has been fairly dead. No notices have gone up, because spring break is three weeks away. I continued to drop by every day to check the correspondence opportunities, however.

I still haven't heard from any of the other companies I've interviewed, other than public accounting firm #2. I'm particularly anxious to hear from the Chicago company.

February 24

Some of my questions were answered today. I got two job rejections as the result of interviews, one from priority #1 in San Francisco and one from the second New York company. Neither was a surprise, although I am disappointed that the interview with the San Francisco firm didn't go well. The letter from the New York company was sort of funny because it was curt and uptight just like the interviewer had been (although it was written by a different person). I showed it to my roommates and they got a laugh out of it too.

However, I got a telegram inviting me to visit the Chicago company. This was exciting, as I've been quite interested in them. I was also unsure of my status with them. I'm very encouraged.

Later in the day I got a long distance call from San Francisco priority #2 firm talking about their upcoming visit. I was dismayed to discover that I will miss their visit to campus if I go to California next week for the research report. This, coupled with the need to find time for the Chicago trip, makes me now want to miss the research report trip.

February 25

Our research report team met and changed the California trip to spring break. Since I had a schedule conflict, two new team members were chosen. Strangely enough, I am happy not to be going. Since I'm going for sure over spring break, this trip would have only been a burden.

February 26

I set up a plant trip to Chicago for this Thursday (3 days away). This company is amazingly well prepared. There will be no need for me to send in an expense report, as they sent me a ticket and have arranged for a limousine to meet me at the airport.

At the placement office, a San Francisco company job description that I had been waiting for came in. I signed up for a position as a securities analyst, mainly because the job is in the city. I'm not sure I'm really interested in that type of work, though.

February 27

I called four of the S.F. companies I would like to see over spring break. Two accepted appoint-

ments. The conversation with one of them, public accounting firm #1, was disappointing. They were not willing to even split expenses and said they had only a few available positions at that time. In fact, the personnel director flatly told me that they looked toward Stanford for their new hires. However, it's still a visit. Of my other calls, one was lukewarm and said to call again when I got there, and another was enthusiastic and will talk to me more about it tomorrow.

February 28

Today was frantic as I continually tried to call Chicago to tell them what flight I was on. They had asked me to do this, as they were to arrange for a limousine to meet me. However, I couldn't get through, so I had to leave a message. Left the apartment in a rush for the airport. When I got into Chicago, the limousine was there and took me to my home. I was relieved to be there. I immediately called some friends in the area and talked for awhile. Then I stayed up until 1 A.M. reading the company material I'd only skimmed before.

March 1

Got awakened at 6 A.M. by a call from my girl friend in Boston. She wished me well on the interviews. I was glad to hear from her, although our relationship has been upsetting and confusing for the past month.

The same limousine picked me up at 8:30 and got me to the plant by 9:00. There I was met by the personnel man who had originally interviewed me at Harvard. He was extremely friendly and relaxed and seemed completely unlike the tense, businesslike man I'd spoken to at school. We chatted about various subjects and finally got around to discussing who I would talk to that day. It was at this point that I realized that I was being interviewed for a job in the treasurer's office. Until today, there had seemed to be a possibility of entering both the controller's office and marketing directly. Consequently, when he asked me if I had any questions before leaving for the first interview, I mentioned my surprise at being considered for this spot. As he had done at Harvard, the personnel man assured me that they were looking for generalists and not specialists and that this was only an entry point. This reassured me, as I'm not sure how much I would enjoy the type of work done in a treasurer's office.

During the day I spoke with the corporate treasurer, financial vice president, executive vice president, and a first-year employee who had

gone to HBS. The talks were very informative, but more importantly, I liked the individuals that I spoke with personally. The style and atmosphere of the company appealed to me very much. The people are very competent, but there is still a casual approach to work. People there were friendly, and the tension level seemed low. In addition, since the company is growing so quickly, there seem to be a lot of interesting projects and a lot of appealing positions to rise to.

At the end of the day, I spoke again with the personnel man. He gave me the official company line about getting in touch within two weeks and sooner if they weren't going to make an offer, but then told me that he had heard all good things from the people I'd spoken to. What a relief his final statement was! I left very turned on about the company.

That evening I went out with some old friends from the area. I realized that I was very tense because of the day's experience. I really like the company, but I have a hang-up about returning to Chicago. This conflict was made even worse by my friends' strong encouragement to return. I got sort of depressed thinking about it and got sort of a sick feeling that the potential jobs I will see in California will not match this opportunity.

March 2

My friend took me to the airport this morning. He talked to me again about the virtues of Chicago and how much they'd like to see me come there. I still feel tense about the whole thing.

When I got home there were three letters awaiting me. A shoot-down from New York firm #1 arrived. It was expected and overdue. The other two letters were from S.F. priority #4 and accounting firm #3. Both said they enjoyed the interviews and indicated I would hear from them soon. This is discouraging, as I had hoped both would offer to split expenses on a trip to San Francisco over spring break. I'll have to call them this week and try to rush the decision. This whole interview process goes much slower than I had expected.

March 3-4

I've noticed that I've been very uptight lately. I think it's mostly because of the job situation. I have no interest in doing school work and seem to be thinking either of jobs or dates. Any distraction seems to be enough to keep me from studying. I think this is another source of my tension. Classes are still demanding and I've been behind and haven't even participated in two of them.

Although this semester's grades won't mean anything, there remains a certain amount of self-induced pressure to do well and get something out of the classes.

March 5

Today was a hectic day. I was running about constantly. At 7:30 P.M. I went to the meeting arranged by S.F. priority #2. It was to be a two-hour lecture and question and answer period about the company. I was really turned off by it. The first hour was devoted to a technical demonstration of the products, complete with blackboard diagrams and technical terms. They certainly made it clear that they were looking for highly technical people. Furthermore, they surprised everyone by announcing that interviews would commence at 10 P.M. after the meeting ended, and would end at midnight. Interviews, all an hour long, would begin again at 7 A.M. the next morning and go until midnight again. Their attitude about interviews bothered me too, obviously.

In spite of this, I signed up for an appointment. Although I was turned off, I feel that I must make a strong effort at every San Francisco job. I don't want to leave any stone unturned.

March 6

Today I called S.F. priority #4 and asked them about seeing me in San Francisco and paying for part of the trip. Their recent letter said that they wouldn't be making decisions for a couple of weeks. The personnel man hesitated at first and didn't make any commitments over the phone, but called back ten minutes later with an invitation. I now have two sponsors for the big trip.

March 7

I called accounting firm #3 in San Francisco today to try to arrange for a spring break interview. I had called them twice before earlier in the week but had no response. Today they told me that the Oakland office would see me. This looks like the third paying customer. I think this is a reasonable portion for each firm to pay.

In the afternoon I had my interview with the San Francisco company that had put on the educational session the other night. True to character, the interview was conducted in a rush on the way to the airport. As we drove a rental car to the airport, the interviewer quizzed me. He was probing, and I must admit that I like him in sort of a perverse way. I took a cab back from the airport. When asked about my plans for

spring break, I told the man that I would be in the Virgin Islands, because I was afraid he'd ask me to stop by if he knew I planned to be in the Bay area. I don't have time to talk to them, as I have filled all my days out there with other interviews. However, this problem may never arise, as I don't expect a plant trip invitation from them.

I'm getting excited about my trip tomorrow. Am also apprehensive about it too. It's now or never for my job plans in San Francisco.

March 8

Rushed to catch a 5 P.M. plane. Missed it. First time I've ever missed a plane. I just had too much to do today. I scheduled a direct flight for an hour later which arrived at about the same time.

My old girl friend met me at the airport. I was sort of nervous about seeing her, as I hadn't seen her in over a year. She looked great, and we really were happy to see each other. We drove right over to my ex-roommate's home where a birthday party for him was in progress. I saw several of my old friends. It really was great. I felt very tense though. I've built up this trip in my mind so much that I couldn't adjust to being here.

Went out dancing later and had a great time. I'm really happy to be back.

March 9

I had an interview today with one of the companies I'd written to. Their needs were vague and undefined. The personnel man said they'd let me know more in April, when their plans were more clear. I liked the interviewer, though, and the potential position, which was in the control area, sounded appealing. I'll be in touch with them.

Since the interview lasted only an hour and a half (a surprise to me), I had a lot of free time, so I took a cable car to the wharf and had a crab cocktail. It was a beautiful, warm, clear day. As I hung on by the outside of the car, I was really turned on by the smell of the ocean air and the breeze in my face. I love this city. Everything seems alive and exciting here, there is no hustle and bustle atmosphere here, nothing like Boston driving. I must move back here.

March 10

Today my ex-girl friend and I went skiing at Squaw Valley. Really enjoyed that. When we got back, I found that the interviewer from S.F. priority #2, whom I had told I would be in the Virgin Islands, had called the apartment. I thought I was going to have a heart attack. He

somehow had discovered that I lied about going to the Virgin Islands and had found out where I was.

March 11

I called home and found out that S.F. priority #2 had called my Cambridge apartment and was told of my whereabouts by one of the roommates. I could strangle him. I decided to call the fellow back as he requested. We set up an appointment starting this Friday noon, possibly going until late Friday evening. I apologized for not having a full day available, but decided not to mention the Virgin Islands lie.

March 12

I interviewed accounting firm #3 in Oakland today. I spent the morning with the managing partner in his plush office overlooking the bay. He seemed like a nice guy, but seemed somewhat awkward and nervous interviewing me. He's a local oldtimer and seems somewhat limited in his abilities. (I later found out that he may have been nervous since he's never hired or dealt with an MBA before.)

The talking lasted until about 2 P.M., when he gave me his card and asked me to call him back Friday after I'd had other interviews to ask questions and give him my impressions about the different firms. This seemed strange to me.

However, I was more concerned by the fact that I was getting ready to leave and that he'd never mentioned anything about reimbursing me for part of the trip expenses, as they had agreed to do. I asked him about it. He said he'd never heard of the arrangement, but would talk to me about it Friday when I called. All in all, a strange interview.

March 13

Talked with S.F. priority #4 today. I spoke to about eight people, who all explained their area of responsibility to me. Some of the jobs seemed marginally interesting and the flexibility of their program seemed desirable.

I liked the people too. They seemed easy going and appeared to like me, as well. In all, I think that they would do in a pinch. They said I'd hear from them in two weeks. I expect to get an offer from them.

March 14

Today was my day with accounting firm #2. I'm tense about it because I have a terrible cold and

am taking all kinds of medicine to suppress it. I'm afraid it will affect my interviews.

As had been true with accounting firm #3, their offices were plush and impressive. I first talked with the personnel man, who was a pleasant and knowledgeable fellow. I was impressed by the fact that they anticipate great growth in their office in the next three years. In fact, they expect to double their size in that time, so they told me they wanted to hire potential managers now. This growth rate really appealed to me.

I was also very impressed with the managers and partners I spoke with. They were all quite young and seemed intelligent and personable. I went to lunch with two staff accountants who were about my age. They seemed OK, but I wasn't as impressed with them as I was with the managers and partners. At the end of the day, I spoke again with the personnel man, who shocked me by offering me a job on the spot. Unfortunately, the salary offer was only \$14,000. He seemed embarrassed about this, as I had asked \$16,500 on my application, and made all kinds of excuses about why they couldn't offer me more—e.g., cost of living, my lack of experience in accounting, Stanford nearby, etc. However, he did seem very anxious to hire me and said before I left that he would reconsider the offer if I was offered more by another San Francisco accounting firm. My opinion is that they're being cheap because they anticipate hiring 35 people. However, I'm very interested in the company and particularly in this office. This has to be my best prospect, so far.

March 15

I had been dreading this day, as I have two appointments—accounting firm #1 in the morning and a company that I contacted in the afternoon. The first interview was interesting. I didn't feel too comfortable around the people—they seemed stiff and uptight. The personnel man was the exception. He was as loose as a goose. We really liked each other. Although they left things indefinite and said they will call, I believe I will get an offer due to my rapport with the personnel officer. Frankly, though, I didn't think they compared with accounting firm #2.

I had to hustle to get to the second interview and arrived late. However, the personnel man was even later. When we finally saw each other, he was very reserved and seemed to be sizing me up. Finally, he seemed to get enthusiastic when I told him I'd like a line position in the field after some financial staff experience. Apparently that pushed his button. He arranged two interviews with financial officers for an hour later. How-

ever, when I met these men, I wasn't too impressed with them and had the impression that finance was not important and, in fact, even looked down upon in the company. Furthermore, the program they had in mind was ill-defined and vague. So, I was turned off, but politely told them that I was interested and would pursue things further at some later date.

I find that I'm becoming weary of all these interviews, and am not worried anymore about getting a good job. Perhaps the offer from public accounting firm #2 took care of that. It doesn't bother me that companies such as the one this afternoon that I aggressively pursued don't seem good at all. There seem to be a lot of good opportunities here. A couple of months ago I wouldn't have believed it.

March 16

This morning I rushed off to my interview with the consultant for one of the firms I had contacted. I was several minutes late but had to wait about an hour to see him. He was an executive search man and a skillful interviewer. I felt that I was inarticulate in the interview, but at the end of the hour he asked me if I wanted to talk to his client (the one I had originally contacted). I was surprised but pleased. The job he described sounded like a high-powered one.

As we left it, I was supposed to call back in the afternoon, and see if he were able to arrange an interview for tomorrow, Saturday, since I was leaving Sunday. This wasn't possible, unfortunately. I told him I would probably return in two or three weeks and could talk to them then.

As the interview ended two hours later than I had anticipated, I drove like a madman for San Francisco priority #2 (the Virgin Islands affair). I was a half-hour late, but ended up waiting another half-hour for an interview. The man I had spoken to on the way to the airport back at HBS took me to lunch and then gave me a plant tour and had me meet a few other people. I got way off schedule, as interviews ran over time. Furthermore, I had to take time out to call the two companies that I'd promised to call, accounting firm #3 and the consultant.

When I called the accounting firm, the Oakland partner asked me why I hadn't seen the San Francisco office as planned. Shocked, I told him I never knew of such a plan. He told me to call San Francisco to try and straighten out the mixup. I called them and said I would like to see them, but explained that it would have to be in two or three weeks when I returned, as I was leaving Sunday. They seemed to understand. The

personnel man even agreed to pay their portion of my expenses after kidding me about it.

After I hung up, I thought about how badly they had screwed up my interview. They missed connections on my schedule and on my trip reimbursement. At least the reimbursement misunderstanding is straightened out. However, I'm not sure I'll see them again when I come back.

As the result of these phone calls, I missed one interview altogether, and arrived at the last man's office at 5:30 for a 4:30 interview. The fellow was a young guy out of the Stanford Business School for four years, about my age. He was very bright and intense, though personable. He took me directly to his home nearby, and he and his wife took me out to dinner at a really fine French restaurant. Although he quizzed me occasionally, the event was mostly social. The Stanford guy was very noncommittal about my status, so I don't know where I stand. The interview day at their plant was certainly a fiasco, though. I can't see how they could give me an offer. I must say that I'm not too interested in them anyway, although it would be an ego blow to be shot down by a peer.

At 10:30 I left for my friend's place. I felt relieved as I drove back. My interviews here are over. The pace has been hectic, the questions repetitive. (I've spoken with eight companies.) It's tiring to be constantly on your toes trying to impress someone. If I was able to, I'd stay on another week and interview the client of the consultant I spoke with and some of the other companies I wasn't able to see at all. However, I have a midterm Monday and am tired of all this interviewing anyway. I only hope that I can return in a couple of weeks to finish up this interviewing without having to pay for the travel myself.

March 17

I got up early today to see my ex-girl friend. We were planning to spend my last day together. Had a great time. Went into the Santa Cruz mountains for lunch, drove along the coastline and shopped in Sausalito and San Francisco. In the evening, we ate at the Blue Fox restaurant. It really has been great to see her. She's been so nice, lending me her car for the week, cooking for me, and being a great companion. I really enjoyed myself out here.

March 18

Got up early to catch an 8:30 flight to Boston. I was a little depressed to be leaving when I got on the plane, but that passed quickly. In general, I am as high as a kite. I feel very encouraged by

my ten days here. I'm more relaxed and happy than I've been in a long time. In fact, my experience out here was such an enjoyable one that I realized that I've been uptight most of the time during my two years at HBS. I really used to be relaxed all of the time.

Seeing my old girl friend was also great for my ego, especially after my experiences with my girl friend in Boston. Finally, I have an offer from the company I like best. I feel great!

When I got to Boston, the scene seemed fitting. It was cold and dark and we were delayed waiting for our baggage. As I was jostled in the MTA, I thought about how much more relaxed people were in San Francisco. I must be psyching myself up to move back.

I couldn't stop talking about the trip when I got back to the apartment. My roommates hadn't gone anywhere over spring break, so they were envious. Studying for my midterm never materialized.

March 19

In the afternoon I spoke with another Bay area firm about financial jobs. I really wasn't too interested, but I hope to get another trip out West to complete all my interviewing. The fellow I spoke with was encouraging.

I felt really loose going into this interview. I'm relaxed and confident from my trip and am not nervous at all anymore. I contrast my feelings now with early in the interview season when I felt I had to get an offer in hand right away. Although I've never been really tense during an interview, every interview seemed critical. Now, some of those that seemed critical no longer seem even desirable.

Also, in contrast to my generally relaxed state of mind, I feel fairly ambitious about school this week. This is probably due to guilt feelings. I've spoken only three times all semester. It is important that I participate pretty soon, particularly if I'm going to miss some class by taking another trip West.

March 20

With my renewed vigor, I went into both classes well prepared for a change (but still didn't speak!). In the afternoon, I had my last on-campus interview of the year. It was for management consulting in Los Angeles. I really liked the interviewer. He was loose as a goose, too, so we got along pretty well. He was very positive about me and indicated an invitation to visit them might be forthcoming.

In the evening, I rushed in expense reports from the recent trip. It really caused a cash flow problem.

March 21

Today I relieved a certain burden from my mind by speaking in New Ventures for the first time. I still have that familiar feeling that I should cover myself in all classes.

The placement office is dead these days, although I continue to stop by daily, partly by habit and partly to check for new correspondence opportunities.

When I got home, I found that I had received a shoot-down letter from San Francisco priority #3, whom I had interviewed about a month ago. At that time they had seemed like a crucial opportunity, but I had forgotten about them completely as these new opportunities have come up. It's amazing how things change.

March 22

Not much happened today. These days I eagerly await the mail, hoping I'll hear something from one of the companies I'm interested in. A part of the excitement, too, is just getting a lot of mail. It's great having so much attention. I'll be sorry when this is all over.

My mood changed drastically in the afternoon when I went to the pub and talked with a friend who has decided he's going to work for an accounting firm. I was angered to find out that none of the firms pay moving expenses for new employees. I was counting on this, as I will have a cash problem in June. It really annoys me and seems really cheap. It shook my interest in accounting firms. I'm willing to pay a salary penalty, but I think this moving expense thing shows something about their attitude. Industrial firms are more generous. These accounting firms are a bit backwards with respect to new employees.

March 23

Had some great spring weather today. It made it hard to work, especially since we have no class on Fridays. Worked on my research report, however. As are most people, we're behind the eight ball with that report. We have a lot to do.

No word from my companies. However, I got an interesting letter from a manufacturer in Ohio. It was the second packet they had sent me, the first being about two months ago. They reminded me that I hadn't seen them and were

giving me a second chance, as they were returning to campus for summer job interviews! They must not have had a good yield the first time. I was very flattered though.

This evening I went to a great party and met some interesting new faces. Seems like when it rains it pours. Everything is going right.

March 24

Another beautiful warm day. It puts everyone in a good mood. My roommates are really bubbly. I did some running and spent a lot of time outside.

In the afternoon I was called by accounting firm #1 in San Francisco. They offered me a job as the result of my visit. Although their salary was a guaranteed, set amount (no overtime as with others), it was still low. I'm not really that keen on this firm, but it's nice to get an offer. Besides they offered to split expenses for my trip. I appreciate this, although I think they were kind of cheap for not offering in advance.

March 25

Today I wrote letters to all the companies I visited in San Francisco. I also filled in two application forms for companies out there I have recently contacted (one via an on-campus interview). This job search takes a lot of time, especially if done aggressively.

In the evening, I was called up by the head of the Los Angeles firm I had interviewed last week. He asked me to meet him at the Fenway, Cambridge this Wednesday. I was disappointed, as I had hoped they would invite me to Los Angeles. However, this may still be in the cards.

March 26-27

Nothing much happened. The wait continues.

March 28

After class ended at 1 o'clock, I rushed over to the Fenway, Cambridge for my second interview with the L.A. firm. At the end of the hour interview, I was startled when told that I would receive an offer in the mail in two days. In addition, they were willing to pay my way to L.A. to visit the company. This put me in a super mood. This offer represents my first definite alternative from accounting and gives me some leverage that I didn't really have before. I will really consider

this offer. Just being wanted again has really turned me on.

In the afternoon I had my last on-campus interview with a San Francisco firm. It went pretty well but I won't be able to take the second step for awhile. I'm not really that interested anyway.

March 29

Today I received a packet from accounting firm #2. In it was a description of a course they want me to take this summer if I work for them. We had discussed the content of the course during my visit there, trying to decide whether or not I needed to take it. Their personnel man thought I should, but I don't really want to. The reason is that the course is given only once, starting in mid-June. I had wanted to travel in Europe for a month or so before beginning work. Unfortunately, this course will not allow that. As I read the description, I was depressed to realize that I really need to take it. This really frustrates me. I really like this job the best, but I am faced with paying the price in salary and benefits, and now, in taking vacation. I'm wondering where to draw the line. I've been trading off pleasurable opportunities for career enhancement all my life, and I want to stop it. I look at public accounting as a good learning experience and a stepping stone. I just don't know what to do.

March 30

I've been thinking about who to see on my final trip to the West Coast in the coming weeks. There are a lot of people I could see. However, I sometimes wonder if I'm just making sure I leave no stone unturned, rather than acting out of interest. I doubt if the few jobs I could look into in San Francisco could interest me more than the accounting jobs. And, after all, I really don't have time to spend days interviewing people if the jobs don't have real potential. However, new opportunities are hard to overlook. It's simply hard to say no. The feeling that the next interview might uncover the "dream job" seems to be my attitude.

I'm still disturbed about this summer course I'm faced with taking with accounting firm #2. In the afternoon I spoke with my financial accounting professor about my doubts. He boosted my spirits a bit by giving me a pep talk about the great experience I'd be getting and how salary, etc., didn't matter. In addition, he told me he strongly felt that accounting firm #2 was the best. I felt better after our talk.

March 31

Today I received a call from the Chicago company I had visited about a month ago. The suspense level with them was high. I had intended to call them in a day or so if I hadn't heard from them. They offered me a job as a profit planner for \$18,000. I like them a lot, but I'm not as turned on as I was when I visited them. A lot of good opportunities have unfolded since then.

April 2

Today the mail brought an offer from the L.A. firm that I spoke with last week. It was very flattering and offered a good salary. There was a certain amount of tension in the car going to school, as one of my roommates had just been shot down by them.

In the same mail, I got a rejection letter from S.F. priority #2. Although I hadn't been too excited by them, I nevertheless disliked being rejected. The letter was from the young Stanford fellow who took me to dinner. That was kind of an ego blow.

April 3

I stopped by the placement office, but the place is really dead. I also spent some time chatting with other students who are considering going with public accounting firms. I'm psyching myself up for the offer I have with public accounting firm #2. I still have a lot of questions to ask them about policies, salary, benefits, etc. I've been putting off calling them about these things. They're subjects I'd prefer to avoid.

April 4

I was called in the afternoon by the fellow I'd be working for in the Chicago company. We just chatted about the job I'd start out in. It really sounds sort of boring—one of those paper-generating staff positions.

April 5

I had a very upsetting experience this evening. I ran into another second year student who I've known for years and dislike immensely, and found out that he was thinking of working for accounting firm #2. Two weeks ago he had asked me about my plans, and since he professed no interest in accounting or finance, I told him all

the virtues of that job. It turned out that he had a job offer from their New York office and now intends to transfer to San Francisco after a year. His interest is based on what I told him I hoped to do, and he concluded he wants to do the same thing. The idea of having to see this guy all the same really bothers me, and it unfuriates me that he weaseled this information out of me. I'm really considering calling the San Francisco office and telling them the situation. If he's going to be there, I'm not sure I want to go.

April 6

I called the L.A. firm that recently offered me a job to arrange for a plant trip during report writing week. The president was very enthusiastic and friendly, but asked me before I hung up what the chance was of me accepting their job offer. I was caught off guard by this question, but babbled that the chances were good, although I was talking with other companies. I feel kind of guilty about making the trip now, as I may have overstated the certainty of my acceptance. I'm really just looking.

April 7

Today I received a rejection letter from S.F. priority #4. This was a surprise, as I had felt that the interviews there had gone well. In fact, this is the first situation I've had during this entire process where I haven't correctly anticipated the results. However, my other offers in the area have overshadowed this anyway.

April 8

I spent the day in Newport, R.I., today visiting my brother. It was really a relief to get away. Constantly thinking about jobs and the Business School can get very tiresome.

April 9

Today I was utterly unprepared for class and was called on to start Urban Land. My response established an all-time personal low. This put me in sort of a bad mood. I was further annoyed by having to walk over to the Fenway, Cambridge at 4 P.M., for what seemed like the tenth time, to speak with the personnel man from the Chicago firm. However, when I arrived the recruiter bought me a couple of beers and we chatted about the position I was offered. I enjoyed it.

When I got home I called up California to arrange to see the firm I had been in contact with briefly during my spring break visit. I will journey up to San Francisco to see them and accounting firm #3 after my visit in L.A.

April 10

Today I did a thing I've been dreading doing for a long time. I called up accounting firm #2 to talk about benefits, salary, and the summer school class they want to send me to. My strategy was to get them to think I was close to accepting their offer and then ask them about time off before reporting (so I can go to Europe), and a salary increase. I had thought over my exact questions (and wording) and order of asking them for the past two weeks. Naturally, I was nervous about the results, since I would really like to work for them. During the conversation, the personnel man said it was OK to take time off before reporting, but declined to consider raising my salary offer. (My offer is \$500 below some others I'd heard of in the area, and he said to tell him of this if it occurred.)

Therefore, the conversation was only marginally successful. However, a half hour after I hung up, he called back and raised my offer by \$500. I was ecstatic. He paused and hemmed and hawed around, hoping I'd accept on the spot. However, I repeated to him that I'd be deciding in two weeks. He told me he'd call on the 22nd, which is less than two weeks. Not too subtle a hint. The pressure is on.

April 11

People are continually asking you who you're going to work for. Until now, I've said I don't know. However, I'm now saying that I'll *probably* work for accounting firm #2. I guess I've pretty much decided that I will work for them, but am holding off to see if a miracle occurs during my trip West next week.

April 12

Had my appointment confirmed in San Francisco with the company I had contacted in the spring. My trip is only next week.

April 13

I can't decide whether to call accounting firm #3 in San Francisco to set up an appointment when

I go next week. I told them I'd see them, since my previous meeting was only with the Oakland office. However, I wasn't too impressed by that office and wonder if I'm wasting my time. I'm influenced because several HBS friends are really turned on by accounting firm #3 in San Francisco. I have this dilemma. Will I be missing out if I don't talk to them versus would I really ever work for them anyway based on my experience to date?

April 14-15

Picked up tickets and pressed suit for trip. I'm hustling around working on my research report to justify not being around during report writing week. Luckily our project is not due at the end of the week.

April 16

I left for L.A. this afternoon for my final trip. The day was hectic. I got up at 7 A.M. and worked on my research frantically until 2 P.M. By then I had finished my part so the other fellows could work without me. Then I madly packed and rushed to the airport. I'll be glad when this all ends. On the plane I was still weighing whether I should talk to accounting firm #3 in San Francisco. I just can't decide.

April 17

I was lodged last night in a really luxurious motel. It had a fabulous view and was very impressive. I got up at 6:00 A.M. to meet the president of the company for breakfast at 7:00. However, he called up at 6:30 and said he'd be there at 7:45. Typical. It's really a hang loose company.

I spent the day touring several jobs of theirs with the president. It seemed pretty interesting, although more technically oriented than I would prefer. On the other hand, I really liked the people in the company personally. I was also favorably impressed by the location. The recent HBS grad I had interviewed with at school took me to dinner and gave me a semi-hard sell. Later he dropped me off at the airport. I had a really enjoyable day.

Ironically, it bothers me because it further complicates the job choice I must make soon.

I arrived in San Francisco at 9:30. My old girl friend picked me up and we went out dancing again. Had a great time again. I really am looking forward to coming out here.

April 18

I had scheduled no interviews today so I slept late. Unfortunately it was very windy so I couldn't lie by the pool as I had planned. Thwarted, I decided to spend part of the afternoon renewing my California driver's license. Then, having nothing to do, I finally decided to call accounting firm #3 at about 4:00. I got the secretary of the personnel man, who said he had stepped out of the office. She told me that he would call back before he left for the day. He never called. This really annoyed me and I decided to forget about them. It was really rude and typical of my experience with them.

April 19

Drove in a rush to the city this morning for an appointment with the company I'd wanted to speak to last time. Their office was unbelievably plush—oriental rugs and carved wooden doors. I was also quite impressed with the people I interviewed. However, they only had me speak to three people for a total of 1½ hours. This was disappointing. They must not be too serious about hiring anyone.

Since I finished early, I decided to call accounting firm #3 again, although I had sworn I wouldn't. I was finally able to get hold of the personnel man. He said he couldn't meet that afternoon because of meetings and that tomorrow, my last day in San Francisco, was only a half-day for them. He sounded discouraging, but I said I'd come in the next morning for a half-day.

I must still have this "mustn't leave any stone unturned" philosophy. There must be something to this firm, since at least one sharp fellow at HBS is going to work for them. On the basis of my experience with them, though, I'm crazy to pursue it. In any event, I don't have any other plans for tomorrow, so it can't hurt to see them.

I spent the rest of the day visiting friends. The pace of this visit is slower and more relaxed than the last one.

April 20

I showed up at the accounting firm at 9:30. Typically, I had a half hour wait. The personnel guy that I've had so much trouble with brought me to his office at 10:00. He's sort of a crass and arrogant fellow and I didn't enjoy talking to him. To my amazement, he pulled out a letter from the Oakland office, whom I'd spoken with during the last trip, rejecting me. It apparently had

been sent after I left for this trip. However, he said the San Francisco office made its own decisions.

He then sent me on my first interview. This lasted about an hour, and I really liked the guy I spoke with. Then he and another fellow took me to lunch. The second fellow, an HBS grad of several years ago, was also a really good guy and very impressive. I spoke with two other people that day and had a similar impression of each. It's a very hang loose group and a friendly atmosphere. Only the personnel man seems like a jerk.

I ended up leaving at 3:00. At the wrap-up interview, I was told I would hear in early May! I had expected that I might get an offer on the spot. Somewhat annoyed, I objected and explained that I had a good deal of pressure to decide by Monday, April 23. He objected at first, but then agreed he would let me know on Monday.

I was so excited by the interview that I drove to accounting firm #2 to talk with them some more about their offer. I wanted to ask them some questions, as my certainty about working for them has been shaken. However, I couldn't remember exactly where their office was and by the time I did, it was too late to see them.

I must say that I am still very upset about the prospect of having the HBS grad that I dislike working at accounting firm #2. Therefore, I feel excited about firm #3, but also frustrated about having the job choice complicated.

April 21

I flew back to Boston this morning. This trip was more enjoyable than the last one. The pace was slower, and I am particularly happy to have seen accounting firm #3 after so much uncertainty. They seemed quite appealing.

When I arrived at my apartment, I gave my research report chairman a call. I was relieved to find that the report was going well and that they hadn't been working all that hard. I had been a little concerned that they would be unhappy about my skipping out during report writing week.

April 22

When I arrived home yesterday, I had received a message that the Chicago firm had called. The personnel man's message was "just tell him I called." In addition, a partner from accounting firm #2 had called. They already are expecting

an answer tomorrow and he left a message that he'd call back on the 23rd. So, the pressure is on.

I decided to write letters to accounting firm #1 and the Chicago manufacturer and the L.A. firm rejecting their job offers. I spent a lot of time on them, particularly on the Chicago manufacturer, as I may want to work for them someday. I made copies of the letters for future reference.

I called a number of classmates and talked about accounting firms #2 and #3. I'm trying to get some perspective on the two. I learned a little, but both still look very good to me.

I also talked specifically about the problem of this fellow I dislike working for #2. Most of the people I talked to were surprised that I was so concerned about it. I realize that I'm making too big a deal out of it, but it is a mind-blowing thought. However, I'm beginning to disregard it as a criterion for making a choice.

I also called home and spoke with my parents about the choices. My Dad, who was a personnel man in his company, suggested I make a list of the pros and cons of each job. This seemed to be a good idea, as there seem to be a lot of areas to consider in making a choice. However, I've been sorting things out in my mind. I think one has to choose as much by feeling as by a rational "pros and cons" approach.

April 23

Today I continued to talk to students who are familiar with accounting firms #2 and #3. I'm beginning to feel more positive about #3, although their "loose" approach to everything worries me a bit. It might be excessive.

At 6:00 I called up accounting firm #3 as we had planned. The personnel man told me that I had been liked a lot, but they couldn't give me an offer because they'd had more acceptances on outstanding offers than expected. This was extremely disappointing to me. I really thought I'd get an offer from them.

However, it certainly simplifies my choice. When accounting firm #2 called an hour later, I accepted.

Although I feel bad about not getting an offer from #3, I'm quite happy to have this job business over with. It is fun and an ego trip for a while, but it also is a lot of work, time, and strain.

April 24

Today I spoke with another fellow who had the same experience with accounting firm #3. They had wanted to hire him but couldn't because of

having had too many acceptances. This made me feel better, as I had been suspicious that I'd simply been shot down.

I spoke with accounting firm #2 again today. We arranged for my summer school course in accounting. In addition, we agreed that I would not start work until September 17. This will give me about two months off after the end of summer school to travel as I had wanted to. I'm happy about this.

At this point, I feel pleased but not excited about my job choice. I feel that I've done the right thing. I'm going to enjoy this summer and am looking forward to going to work.

April 25–May 2

As people continue to ask me about my job plans, I am becoming more enthusiastic about them myself. While many of my peers consider accounting the ultimate bore (to my frustration), others recognize the same advantages I see. In addition, everyone is envious of my being in San Francisco.

At this point, thinking about the job makes me a little apprehensive, but I'm fairly confident I've made the right move. I think I recognize the bad points as well as the good and feel that I have the total picture in perspective.

Looking back on the last few months I have a number of general observations. First of all, my general job objective did not hurt me at all. A general objective will hurt only in certain professions, such as investment banking, where the recruiters expect you to be interested in only their profession. Banks, consultants, accountants, and most manufacturing firms don't flinch at general objectives.

Secondly, I realized during interviewing just how much some companies value HBS graduates over all others. Whether justified or not, the mystique really seems to exist.

Thirdly, I was interested to note my own tendency to rationalize the experiences that went bad. However, I do feel that bad interviews are usually seen that way by both parties. (I had only one big surprise—S.F. priority #4.) In any event, I think it's not a bad thing to do. Remaining confident and loose is one of the most important things to do during the interview process.

Finally, I compare my job search with that of my two business school roommates. They both sat back, sent no letters and waited for companies to come to them. Their response was poor, and they spent some nervous weeks in April before finally getting jobs. In fact, one roommate panicked and arranged an interview with the placement director, who suggested he write letters expressing continued interest to those companies that had recently rejected him. He finally ended up getting a job with a firm that had earlier rejected him, largely as the result of the interest expressed in his letter.

The Life Themes of Henry Rock

1. Economic considerations influence decisions heavily.
 2. Interested in quantitative and technical things.
 3. Seeks new experience.
 4. Social life and family are important.
 5. Monetary rewards are a major motivation.
 6. Prefers informal, small work environments.
 7. Political considerations influence him strongly.
 8. Seeks power.
 9. Seeks status recognition—both from self and from others.
 10. Resents people who underestimate his abilities.
 11. Takes pride in achievement.
 12. Works well with others.
 13. But can be critical of others.
 14. Is not particularly creative or esthetically inclined.
 15. But desires to do things with a certain "flair."
 16. Likes competition and athletics.
 17. Works hard (and long hours).
 18. Has a continuing interest in business.
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